Valley Collaborative
Board of Directors Meeting
11 Executive Park Drive, North Billerica, Massachusetts
Thursday, October 23, 2025 ▪ 10:00 a.m.

Action Required

I. Approval of Minutes
   a. Board of Directors Meeting, General Session Minutes: September 11, 2025

II. Financial Update
   a. FY'26 Update
      - Balance Sheet as of 9.30.2025
      - Budget to Actual as of 9.30.2025
      - Preliminary Surplus Revenue Calculation
   b. Treasurer's Report(s)
      - August 2025
      - September 2025
   c. PARS Statement(s)
      - September 2025
   d. Enrollment Update

No Action Required

III. Making a Difference Awards

IV. Communications

State Agencies:
   a. DESE Annual Report Guidelines for Education Collaboratives
   b. DESE Annual Independent Audit Guidelines for Education Collaboratives
   c. DESE Fall 2025 Education Collaboratives Bulletin
   d. MOEC Financial Leadership Academy Email
   e. DDS CORI Audit Letter

Valley Program Updates:
   a. Elementary School Update & Outdoor Hiking and Camping Activities (MOOR Grant)
   b. Middle School & Transitional High School Update - Alternative Programming
   c. Middle School & Transitional High School Update - Transitional Programming
   d. Adult Services Update
   e. Safety Committee Update

Community and Staff:
   a. Valley Collaborative Fall 2025 Newsletter
   b. Kudos Email re: clean facilities

V. Executive Session: To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel and/or conduct contraction negotiations with nonunion personnel: Executive Director

Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
General Session Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2025
10:08 a.m. – 10:33 a.m.
11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, Massachusetts

Board Members Present: Dr. Jay Lang, Dr. Denise Pigeon, Dr. Christopher Chew, Dr. Geoff Bruno, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Mr. Brad Morgan

Board Members Absent: Mr. Steven Stone, Dr. Kerry Clery

Collaborative Representatives Present: Dr. Chris Scott, Executive Director; Ms. Heidi Kriger, Treasurer; James A. George, Business Manager/Accountant

Also Present: Thomas Lent, Barrow Lent LLP

Call to Order: Dr. Jay Lang, Chairman, convened the Collaborative Board Meeting at 10:08 a.m. and requested that the record indicate that the Board Meeting was being held remotely. Dr. Lang conducted roll call attendance of all Board Members participating remotely.

Dr. Lang and Dr. Chris Scott welcomed all in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Jay Lang requested the Board to review the meeting minutes made available for review and asked for a motion relating to the minutes.

On a motion made by Dr. Christopher Chew and seconded by Dr. Denise Pigeon, a quorum of voters being present, it was voted by roll call vote:

VOTED: To approve the General Session Meeting Minutes for the Board of Directors dated June 12, 2025.

The roll call vote was 4-0-3. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Dr. Denise Pigeon, Dr. Christopher Chew, Dr. Geoff Bruno. Abstain: Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Mr. Brad Morgan

Financial Update

Executive Director's Report

Dr. Scott directed the Board to the financial update memo contained within the Board meeting materials. Dr. Scott reviewed the revenues, expenses, budget and enrollment. Dr. Scott reviewed the PARS statements, copies of which were within the Board materials. She also reviewed the projected cumulative surplus fund calculation, which remains subject to audit, as provided by

James A. George, Business Manager/Accountant which would be reviewed further during the upcoming Board meetings. Dr. Scott also reviewed with the Board enrollment numbers and projections, which the Board discussed.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Heidi Kriger, the Collaborative Treasurer, provided the Board with her report which covered the months through July 2025. Ms. Kriger provided a verbal summary of her report. A written summary report was contained within the Board materials. There was no further discussion.

On a motion made by Dr. Michael Flanagan and seconded by Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, a quorum of voters being present, it was voted by roll call vote:

VOTED: That the Board of Directors accepts the report of the Collaborative Treasurer, as presented at this meeting, and requests that a copy of the report be maintained at the Collaborative

The roll call vote was 7-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Dr. Denise Pigeon, Dr. Christopher Chew, Dr. Geoff Bruno, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Mr. Brad Morgan

25 Linnell Circle, Billerica: Parking Lot Lease

Dr. Scott directed the Board to her memorandum presenting the need for staff parking space at 25 Linnell Circle, Billerica. The lease agreement for space at 25 Linnell Circle, Billerica recently was not renewed or extended, but the Collaborative had discussed with the Executive Director of the Middlesex County Retirement Board System the continued use of the parking lot. As a result of these discussions, the Middlesex County Retirement Board had proposed a lease agreement which permitted the continued use of the parking lot through a 5-year lease agreement, effective July 1, 2025, at a rate of $1000/month to park 36 vehicles in the designated parking lot (which the Collaborative previously had improved by way of numbers and parking designations). Dr. Scott requested the Board to approve the proposed lease agreement, as summarized by Dr. Scott, within the Board materials and as set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding provided by the Middlesex County Retirement Board. The Board discussed.

On a motion made by Dr. Michael Flanagan and seconded by Mr. Brad Morgan, a quorum of voters being present, it was voted:

VOTED: That the Board of Directors authorizes the Executive Director to finalize and approve, on behalf of the Board of Directors, a lease agreement with the Middlesex County Retirement System for use of the parking lot at 25 Linnell Circle, Billerica, MA, under the substantive terms and conditions presented at this meeting, including the rental rates, and further authorizes the Executive Director to execute such lease agreement on behalf of the Board of Directors.

The roll call vote was 7-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Dr. Denise Pigeon, Dr. Christopher Chew, Dr. Geoff Bruno, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Mr. Brad Morgan

Quarterly Reports on Collaborative Business

Dr. Scott directed the Board to the quarterly reports on Collaborative business that were both in the Board materials and provided to the respective member districts. There was no further discussion.

Communications

Dr. Scott directed the Board to the communications which were provided within the Board materials for informational purposes. There was no further discussion.

On a motion made by Dr. Christopher Chew and seconded by Dr. Geoff Bruno, a quorum of voters being present, it was voted by roll call vote:

VOTED: To adjourn the Board meeting.

The roll call vote was 7-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Dr. Denise Pigeon, Dr. Christopher Chew, Dr. Geoff Bruno, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Mr. Brad Morgan

Dr. Jay Lang adjourned the Collaborative Board Meeting at 10:33 a.m.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS USED, DISTRIBUTED AND REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING:

- School Year 2025-2026 Electronic Board Binder Board Meeting, September 11, 2025

Respectfully Submitted,

_____
Dr. Jay Lang, Chairman
Dated: _____

3

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica MA 01821 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Mr. James George, Accountant/Business Manager
Date: October 23, 2025
Re: Financial Update - FY'25 & FY'26

Valley Collaborative's FY'25 school year was very successful programmatically and financially.

- The financial position of the Collaborative remains very strong. The total assets at June 30, 2025 is $25,662,367 (unaudited). This includes $8,282,784 (unaudited) held in the OPEB Trust at June 30, 2025.
- Capital fund remains fully funded at the end of FY'25 ($1.5M).
- Change in net assets from operations in FY'25 was approximately $1,664,940 as a result of strong management of Collaborative expenses and personnel costs while continuing to meet the needs of the students and adult clients the Collaborative serves.
- The Board has previously voted to return $1M of surplus in FY'25. Given that the 25% Surplus calculation is premised upon Valley's expense budget, the Cumulative Surplus Percentage before the final audit is currently 25+%. After the final audit is complete in November, an additional vote will be required to return additional funds. At this time, we are expecting this number to be between $100,000 and $200,000 more.
- Valley's currently completing its FY'25 Independent Financial Audit. Daniel Shaffner, CPA with Fritz DeGuglielmo LLC, will present the positive audit results at the November 20, Board of Director's meeting.
- Valley has entered into FY'26 in a very strong financial position. Valley's payroll costs for July and August was $3.428M and revenue was $4.059M.
- Valley has had a very strong first quarter. As of September 30, 2025, Valley has completed 50 of 210 days (23.8%) for FY'26 resulting in total revenues at 25% of the budget and total expenses at 25% of the budget. Typically, the first quarter of the year's expenses exceed the percentage of the year complete, as Valley does most of its capital purchasing for the school year in Q1. Valley's revenue is above expectation as enrollment in both the K-12 School District and Adult Services is at a historical high for this time of year. Enrollment as of September 30, 2025 is 268 students, whereas last year at this time, enrollment totaled only 256 students; DDS/Adult Services will hit an enrollment record in November of 140 individuals.

Required Action:

- None

Attachments:

- Balance Sheet September 30, 2025
- Income Statement September 30, 2025
- Preliminary 25% Surplus Calculation
- PARS
- Treasurer's Report
- Enrollment Update

Valley Collaborative

Interim Statement of Net Assets
For the Period Ended
September 30, 2025

UNAUDITED

ASSETS

Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	$	5,952,197
Restricted Investments - OPEB		8,329,655
Accounts Receivable, Net		4,189,310
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets		31,349
Cash Held for Member Districts		399,312
Total Current Assets		18,901,823
Non-Current Assets		
Land & Building		4,352,391
Furniture, Equipment, and Leasehold Improvements, Net of Depreciation		2,267,954
Construction in Progress		-
Total Non-Current Assets		6,620,345
TOTAL ASSETS	**$**	**25,522,168**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	$	1,648,355
Other Liabilities		2,516,128
Member District Accounts (Settlement)		399,312
Total Current Liabilities		4,563,795
Total Liabilities		4,563,795
Net Assets		
Operating - Unrestricted		6,163,865
Restricted - Student Activities		41,862
Reserved - OPEB Trust		5,840,459
Reserved - Capital		1,500,000
Invested in Capital Assets, Net of Related Debt		7,412,187
Total Net Assets		20,958,373
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	**$**	**25,522,168**
		-

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted.
No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative

Interim Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets
For the Period Ending September 30, 2025
50 of 210 (23.8%) School Days

UNAUDITED

	AMENDED BUDGET	ACTUAL	
REVENUES			
Services	$ 22,399,500	$ 5,431,371	
State Contracts	5,100,000	1,233,231	
Other	750,000	265,028	
Interest	30,000	12,985	
Total Revenues	**28,279,500**	**6,942,615**	25%
EXPENSES			
Salaries	18,788,975	4,908,587	
Employee Benefits	3,674,850	925,096	
Operating Expenses	3,347,463	777,603	
Leases & Rentals	594,727	195,046	
Depreciation	751,000	0	
Total Expenses	**27,157,015**	**6,806,332**	25%
Change in Net Assets - Operating	**$ 1,122,485**	**$ 136,283**	
Non Operating Activities			
Return to Member Districts	-		
Non-Operating Expenses (1)	(1,075,000)	(791,842)	
Change in Net Assets	**$ 47,485**	**$ (655,559)**	

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted. No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative
Cumulative Surplus Calculation - FY 25
As of June 30, 2025 Projection

(A)	Voted Cumulative Surplus as of June 30, 2024	5,803,352
(B)	Amount of (A) used to make contribution to OPEB Trust PY	-
	Amount of Current Year Return Previously Voted	(1,000,000)
(c)	Unexpended FY 25 General Funds	1,782,313
(D)	Cumulative Surplus as of 6/30/25	6,585,665
(E)	FY 25 Total General Fund Expenditures	25,712,361
(F)	Cumulative Surplus Percentage	25.61%
	Estimated Amount of Excess Cumulative Surplus as of June 30, 2025	157,574

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
TREASURER'S REPORT
AUGUST 31, 2025

		Beginning Balance	Receipts	Payroll	Accounts Payable	Earnings	Transfers	Ending Balance
ENTERPISE BANK ACCOUNTS								
Operating	**a/c 493426**	$ 4,825,983.07	$ 678,601.71		$ (483,059.43)		$ (1,395,000.00)	$ 3,626,525.35
Payroll	**a/c 795823**	$ 229,187.29		$ (1,449,728.97)			$ 1,400,000.00	$ 179,458.32
Joe's Bistro	**a/c 531401**	$ 5,690.15	$ 949.66				$ (5,000.00)	$ 1,639.81
ICS MMDA	**a/c 856490**	$ 4,780.85				$ 2.02		$ 4,782.87
Capital Reserve	**a/c 4063467**	$ 1,500,000.00						$ 1,500,000.00
Independence Project	**a/c 821315**	$ 114.36	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 114.36
TOTAL ENTERPRISE BANK ACCOUNTS		$ 6,565,755.72	$ 679,551.37	$ (1,449,728.97)	$ (483,059.43)	$ 2.02	$ -	$ 5,312,520.71
MMDT	**a/c 0044263747**	$ 1,161,361.95	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 4,393.34	$ -	$ 1,165,755.29
Total Unrestricted Cash		$ 7,727,117.67	$ 679,551.37	$ (1,449,728.97)	$ (483,059.43)	$ 4,395.36	$ -	$ 6,478,276.00
PARS OPEB Trust		$ 8,329,654.65	$ -	$ -	$ (2,220.80)	$ 184,121.17	$ -	$ 8,511,555.02
TOTAL CASH		$ 16,056,772.32	$ 679,551.37	$ (1,449,728.97)	$ (485,280.23)	$ 188,516.53	$ -	$ 14,989,831.02

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
TREASURER'S REPORT
SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

		Beginning Balance	Receipts	Payroll	Accounts Payable	Earnings	Transfers	Ending Balance
ENTERPISE BANK ACCOUNTS								
Operating	**a/c 493426**	$ 3,626,525.35	$ 2,074,625.47		$ (380,330.76)		$ (1,950,000.00)	$ 3,370,820.06
Payroll	**a/c 795823**	$ 179,458.32		$ (1,844,178.10)			$ 1,950,000.00	$ 285,280.22
Joe's Bistro	**a/c 531401**	$ 1,639.81	$ 1,572.11					$ 3,211.92
ICS MMDA	**a/c 856490**	$ 4,782.87				$ 1.95		$ 4,784.82
Capital Reserve	**a/c 4063467**	$ 1,500,000.00						$ 1,500,000.00
Independence Project	**a/c 821315**	$ 114.36	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 114.36
TOTAL ENTERPRISE BANK ACCOUNTS		$ 5,312,520.71	$ 2,076,197.58	$ (1,844,178.10)	$ (380,330.76)	$ 1.95	$ -	$ 5,164,211.38
MMDT	**a/c 0044263747**	$ 1,165,755.29	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 4,203.86	$ -	$ 1,169,959.15
Total Unrestricted Cash		$ 6,478,276.00	$ 2,076,197.58	$ (1,844,178.10)	$ (380,330.76)	$ 4,205.81	$ -	$ 6,334,170.53
PARS OPEB Trust		$ 8,511,555.02	$ -	$ -	$ 200,006.54	$ (2,265.57)	$ -	$ 8,709,295.99
TOTAL CASH		$ 14,989,831.02	$ 2,076,197.58	$ (1,844,178.10)	$ (180,324.22)	$ 1,940.24	$ -	$ 15,043,466.52

PARS PUBLIC AGENCY RETIREMENT SERVICES

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
PARS OPEB Trust Program

Account Report for the Period
9/1/2025 to 9/30/2025

Heidi Kriger
Treasurer
Valley Collaborative
40 Linnell Circle
Billerica, MA 01821

Account Summary

Source	Beginning Balance as of 9/1/2025	Contributions	Earnings	Expenses	Distributions	Transfers	Ending Balance as of 9/30/2025
OPEB	$8,511,555.02	$0.00	$200,006.54	$2,265.57	$0.00	$0.00	$8,709,295.99
Totals	**$8,511,555.02**	**$0.00**	**$200,006.54**	**$2,265.57**	**$0.00**	**$0.00**	**$8,709,295.99**

Investment Selection

Source	
OPEB	**Target Index Balanced Strategy**

Investment Objective

Source	
OPEB	Dual goals are to provide a moderate amount of current income with moderate capital growth.

Investment Return

Source	1-Month	3-Months	1-Year	Annualized Return 3-Years	Annualized Return 5-Years	Annualized Return 10-Years	Plan's Inception Date
OPEB	2.35%	5.23%	11.20%	15.33%	8.07%	8.32%	6/24/2015

Information as provided by US Bank, Trustee for PARS; Not FDIC Insured; No Bank Guarantee; May Lose Value

Past performance does not guarantee future results. Performance returns may not reflect the deduction of applicable fees, which could reduce returns. Information is deemed reliable but may be subject to change.
Investment Return: Annualized rate of return is the return on an investment over a period other than one year multiplied or divided to give a comparable one-year return.
Account balances are inclusive of Trust Administration, Trustee and Investment Management fees

Valley Collaborative Programmatic Enrollment Data									
Program	9/30/2025			9/15/2024			6/5/2025		
	Member	Non-Member	Program Total	Member	Non-Member	Program Total	Member	Non-Member	Program Total
Elementary	47	51	98	43	38	81	56	49	105
Middle - ALT Programming	5	6	11	5	11	16	7	10	17
Middle - Transitional Programming	4	15	19	5	9	14	4	14	18
Middle - Transitional ISN	6	3	9	7	3	10	6	3	9
High - ALT Programming	31	22	53	31	21	52	33	21	54
High - Transitional Programming	43	35	78	52	31	83	42	34	76
Totals	136	132	268	143	113	256	148	131	279

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: October 23, 2025
Re: Student, DDS/MRC Adult Program Participant and Staff Making a Difference Award Presentation

---

We would like to recognize Valley's student and staff members of the month from the Elementary, Middle, and High School as well as a DDS/MRC Adult Program Participant and staff member from the Adult Services Program for all their hard work and dedication to the Collaborative.

Valley Elementary School
Student of the Month: **Sammy Howlett**
Staff of the Month: **Luke Shaw**

Valley Middle School – Alternative Programming
Student of the Month: **Emmanuel Terranova**

Valley Middle School – Transitional Programming
Student of the Month: **Jaylin Jean-Baptiste**
Staff of the Month: **Taylor Pitari**

Valley Transitional High School – Alternative Programming
Student of the Month: **Tavernier Harris**
Staff of the Month: **Cristina Iebba**

Valley Transitional High School – Transitional Programming
Student of the Month: **Gavin Wargo**
Staff of the Month: **Peter Teutsch**

Valley Adult Services
DDS/MRC Adult Program Participant: **Hannah Dwight**
Staff of the Month: **Christine Joslin**

District
Staff of the Month: **Danny Troung**

Required Action:

- None

Attachments:

- None

MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Pedro Martinez | Commissioner

ANNUAL REPORT GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATION COLLABORATIVES

These guidelines provide direction on the format, content, and submission of the education collaborative annual report which includes the 2024-25 academic year.

Fiscal Year 2025

This document was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Pedro Martinez, Commissioner

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Members
Ms. Katherine Craven, Chair, Brookline
Mr. Matt Hills, Vice-Chair, Newton
Ms. Isabella Chamberlain, Student Member, Hudson
Dr. Ericka Fisher, Worcester
Dr. Christina Grant, Cambridge
Ms. Farzana Mohamed, Newton
Ms. Dálida Rocha, Worcester
Ms. Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington
Dr. Patrick Tutwiler, Secretary of Education, Andover
Dr. Martin West, Newton

Pedro Martinez, Commissioner
Secretary to the Board

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an affirmative action employer, is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public.
We do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Inquiries regarding the Department's compliance with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Human Resources Director, 135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149. Phone: 781-338-6105.

© 2025 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Permission is hereby granted to copy any or all parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes. Please credit the "Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education."

This document is printed on recycled paper.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370
www.doe.mass.edu

Table of Contents

Table of Contents 3

Introduction 4

Posting Requirements 6

Naming of Documents and Electronic Submission 7

Collaborative Board of Directors Acceptance 7

APPENDIX Certification of Board Vote 9

Endnotes 10

Introduction

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, Section 4E and Education Collaborative Regulations, 603 CMR 50.00 require each education collaborative to submit an annual report to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education (commissioner), to each member school committee and charter school board (member district).[i] The annual report must address the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2024 and ending on June 30, 2025. The annual report must be approved by the collaborative board of directors (collaborative board) and submitted on or before **January 1, 2026.**[ii] The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) issues these guidelines to provide direction on the format, content, and submission of the FY25 annual reports.

PLEASE NOTE THAT JANUARY 1ST IS A STATUTORY DEADLINE AND CANNOT BE WAIVED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

An extensive summary of the collaborative's programs and services from the previous fiscal year should be included in the annual report. The collaborative's progress toward achieving the goals and purpose(s) outlined in the collaborative agreement can be evaluated by member districts, the collaborative board, the Department, and the general public through the annual report. **It is the collaborative's responsibility to conform to the current reporting requirements of the Department. Incomplete annual reports will be rejected by the Department and will require resubmission.**

Annual Report Content Requirements

Letter from Executive Director and/or the Chairperson of the Collaborative Board This letter serves as an introduction to the key elements of the annual report and provides a brief overview of collaborative activities and significant changes from the previous annual report, including the total number of students served by the collaborative, and any new programs or services, or significant changes in program offerings or locations since the last annual report.

General Information - Include the name of the collaborative, the contact information for key personnel, the physical address of the collaborative's administrative offices, the website for the collaborative, and the fiscal year that is being presented in the report.

Governance and Leadership - List the member districts, and the names and roles of the appointed representatives for each member district.

Programs and Services - Provide a detailed description and location for each program offered by the collaborative. Describe the type and scope of service for each service offered by the collaborative, noting the number of individuals served, the number of

professional development sessions offered, and/or the entities benefiting from cooperative purchasing, joint transportation, or Medicaid billing.

Progress Made toward Achieving the Purposes and Objectives Set Forth in the Collaborative Agreement - Provide a detailed description of the progress made toward achieving the purpose(s) and objectives **set forth in the collaborative agreement.** Discuss the measures that the collaborative uses to determine progress toward achieving the purpose(s) and objectives; provide evidence that the collaborative has met or is striving to meet the measures.

Cost-Effectiveness of Programs and Services – Provide a description of the cost-effectiveness of each of the collaborative's programs and each of the collaborative's services, including clear explanations of the methodologies used to assess cost-effectiveness. Include citations to data sources (name comparable programs, schools and the like, to which you draw comparisons). Please ensure that the report also addresses every program and service offered by the collaborative, that reasonable methodologies are used to measure cost-effectiveness, and that they are described sufficiently, so that readers understand how the collaborative measured cost-effectiveness.

The Department does not advocate or promote any particular means of measuring cost-effectiveness. That determination is to be made by the individual collaborative. However, there are a number of different ways collaboratives in Massachusetts and educational service agencies in other states have measured cost-effectiveness, some of which are listed below. These examples are not all-inclusive and are not intended to require any particular means of measurement. Measuring cost-effectiveness may include cost comparisons and qualitative comparisons.

Measuring Cost-effectiveness of Programs and Services: Examples

Cost comparisons - The cost of programs and services offered through a collaborative can be compared to the cost of providing the same programs and services in individual districts or through private placements or contracts. Please identify the agencies or entities to which cost comparisons are made. Documentation or evidence may include:

- Reductions in combined administration and coordination costs for staffing and administration of programs and services versus costs at the individual district level;
- Collaborative tuitions compared to costs of program creation or maintenance, at the individual district level;
- Costs incurred by individual districts' placement of students at collaborative programs compared to those at comparable private schools that offer substantially similar programs;

- Fees-for-services for related services as compared to the costs individual districts would pay full-time employees, private vendors and/or hospitals;
- Transportation savings due to joint bidding and/or shared routes;
- Transportation costs as compared to those districts would pay or have paid in the past;
- Savings realized from Medicaid billing;
- Professional development (PD) costs compared to those an individual teacher or district would have to pay colleges, universities, and/or other PD providers;
- Savings in travel costs and staff time for staff to attend professional development sessions at locations closer to their local districts; and
- Savings realized from increased bargaining power associated with pooled purchases of school and professional development materials, cafeteria food, utilities, health insurance and transportation vehicles.

Qualitative comparisons - The cost-effectiveness determination does not have to be based solely on financial analysis, but may include qualitative factors or other tangible benefits, as follows:

- Ability to offer higher quality services (e.g., a more costly and more experienced professional development provider) due to pooling resources;
- Increased opportunity through shared resources, (e.g., teachers from smaller districts or districts with a lower budget can avail themselves of the same professional development as teachers from larger or more affluent districts);
- Ability to retain students in the least restrictive environment for academic programs and/or extracurricular and/or non-academic activities;
- Standardization of content and ability for follow-up (fewer presenters can ensure consistency of message, and local presenters/PD providers can monitor delivery of content more readily); and
- Likelihood that service would not have been provided at all if an individual district had to plan and fund the service alone.

Posting Requirements

Each collaborative must publish the approved annual report with the annual independent audit in an accessible format on the collaborative's website. Once approved by the board, the annual report and the annual independent audit are public documents and must remain accessible to the public.

Naming of Documents and Electronic Submission

Please be sure to use the following naming conventions when you submit the following documents, as applicable.

Document	File Format	Naming Convention	Notes
Annual Report (2024-25)	PDF	FY25 **CollabName** _Annual Report	An **acronym** may be substituted for the **CollabName**
Vote of Acceptance by the Board of Directors	PDF	FY25 **CollabName**_Annual Report Vote	

All documents must be submitted to the Department in electronic format (PDF for reports, letters, and signature pages) via the Education Collaborative Drop Box in the Department's Security Portal. Please ensure that the report is saved as a PDF and not as an image file. Image files are often too large to upload to the Drop Box. All annual reports must be received between **October 1, 2025,** and **January 1, 2026**, by following these directions below:

1. Navigate to the MA Education Security Portal webpage.
2. Enter your username and password.
3. Select **Application List** at the top of the page.
4. Select **Drop Box Central** from the center of the page.
5. Select **Education Collaboratives** from the Drop Box list then select **Next**.
6. Select **Browse** to find and select the FY25 Annual Report on your computer.
7. Select the **Upload File** button to transmit your document.

If you are unable to access any of these fields, you may not have the necessary security clearance and should contact your collaborative's directory administrator in order to gain access to the portal.

Once your submission has been received, you will receive an email confirming receipt of the document(s), the date, and the time of submission. Please email any questions regarding this submission to the educationcollaborativeteam@mass.gov.

Collaborative Board of Directors Acceptance

Collaborative Board Approval and Submission of the Annual Report - The collaborative board must discuss and vote to approve the annual report at an open meeting. Upon approval by the collaborative board and no later than January 1st, the

annual report must be submitted to the chair of each member district and the commissioner. Documentation of the collaborative board's approval in the form of a signed certification from the collaborative board chair (See Appendix) or the approved meeting minutes must be submitted with the annual report.

APPENDIX Certification of Board Vote

NAME OF COLLABORATIVE

Acceptance of Annual Report (Board Vote)
For the Year Ended June 30, 2025

We, the Board of Directors of the **[Insert name of Collaborative]**, voted at an open meeting to accept the **[**2025-26 **CollabName** _Annual Report**]** as submitted for the fiscal year 2025.

We also certify that the representations made in the annual report are accurate and have been disclosed in accordance with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidelines.

Board Chairperson Signature

Date of Board Vote

Endnotes

[i] Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, Section 4E (e) Each education collaborative shall submit an annual report, on or before January 1 for the previous fiscal year, to the commissioner, to each member school committee and to each member charter school board. The annual report shall be in such form as may be prescribed by the board of elementary and secondary education and shall include, but not be limited to: (1) information on the programs and services provided by the education collaborative, including discussion of the cost-effectiveness of such programs and services and progress made towards achieving the objectives and purposes set forth in the collaborative agreement; and (2) audited financial statements and the independent auditor's report, as described in subsection (d). Each education collaborative shall publish such annual report on its internet website and shall provide a printed hard copy of the most recent annual report to members of the public upon request.

[ii] Education Collaborative Regulations 603 CMR 50.08: An educational collaborative shall prepare an annual report. Upon approval by the collaborative board of directors and no later than January 1st of each year, the annual report for the preceding fiscal year shall be submitted to the chair of each member district and the Commissioner. The collaborative shall make the annual report available on its website. The format and content of the annual report shall be presented in accordance with guidelines established by the Department, and shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

(a) information on the programs and services provided by the collaborative;
(b) discussion of the cost-effectiveness of such programs and services;
(c) progress made toward achieving the objectives and purposes set forth by the collaborative ; and
(d) audited financial statements and the independent auditor's report in accordance with 603 CMR 50.08(2).

MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Pedro Martinez | Commissioner

Annual Independent Audit Guidelines For Education Collaboratives

These audit guidelines provide information on the financial reporting and audit requirements for Commonwealth of Massachusetts approved education collaboratives

Fiscal Year 2025

This document was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Pedro Martinez, Commissioner

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Members
Ms. Katherine Craven, Chair, Brookline
Mr. Matt Hills, Vice-Chair, Newton
Ms. Isabella Chamberlain, Student Member, Hudson
Dr. Ericka Fisher, Worcester
Dr. Christina Grant, Cambridge
Ms. Farzana Mohamed, Newton
Ms. Dálida Rocha, Worcester
Ms. Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington
Dr. Patrick Tutwiler, Secretary of Education, Andover
Dr. Martin West, Newton

Pedro Martinez, Commissioner
Secretary to the Board

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an affirmative action employer, is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public.
We do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Inquiries regarding the Department's compliance with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Human Resources Director, 135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149. Phone: 781-338-6105.

© 2025 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Permission is hereby granted to copy any or all parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes. Please credit the "Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education."

This document is printed on recycled paper

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370
www.doe.mass.edu

Table of Contents

Introduction and Background 4

Cumulative Surplus Calculation 6

Collaborative Board of Directors Acceptance 6

Naming of Documents, Electronic Submission and Posting Requirements 7

APPENDIX A Certification of Board Votes 9

APPENDIX B Cumulative Surplus Worksheet 11

APPENDIX C Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs 12

APPENDIX D Status Report of Prior Audit Findings 13

APPENDIX E Endnotes 14

Introduction and Background

Massachusetts General Law c. 40, § 4E[i] and Education Collaborative Regulations 603 CMR 50.08(2)[ii], require each education collaborative to annually ensure an independent audit is conducted of its accounts, consistent with generally accepted governmental auditing standards and consistent with guidelines issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department). These Annual Independent Audit Guidelines for Education Collaboratives (guidelines) are provided to assist collaboratives in fulfilling the audit requirement and should be shared with your independent auditors to ensure the submission of a complete independent audit report.

The guidelines that follow outline the financial statements to be audited, specific additional disclosures, required votes of acceptance (Appendix A) of the annual independent audit report by the collaborative board of directors (board), instructions for submission to the Department and should be shared with independent auditors to ensure the submission of a complete independent audit report.

The collaborative must annually prepare financial statements that meet the requirements of 603 CMR 50.07(11). The collaborative's accounts, financial statements, accompanying notes, and supplemental schedules must be audited on an annual basis in accordance with the requirements cited throughout this document. In addition to the audited financial statements, accompanying notes, management letters and/or memos to the board, the submission must also provide the following supplementary disclosures for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025 (FY25):

The names, duties, and total compensation of the five most highly compensated employees - Include the name, a general statement of duties, and total compensation for each of the five highest compensated employees.

Transactions between the collaborative and any related for-profit or non-profit organization - Report on the amount and nature of each transaction or indicate that the collaborative had no transactions with a related for-profit or non-profit organization, as defined in M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E.

Amounts expended on services for individuals aged 22 years and older - Indicate the amounts expended or indicate that the collaborative did not expend funds on services for individuals aged 22 years and older.

Amounts expended on administration and overhead. - The amounts must include both administration and overhead. Both categories of expenditures must be labeled to clearly indicate the category of cost addressed.

Accounts held by the collaborative that may be spent at the discretion of another person/entity - Report on the amount and the purpose of each account, as well as the

legal authority for holding the account, or indicate that the collaborative held no such accounts. Accounts or funds held by the collaborative on behalf of a school committee as prepayment for tuition or services, as permitted by M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E(h), must be identifiable in the financial statements and in the audit report, but should **not** be reported in this category.

Transactions or contracts related to purchase, sale, rental or lease of real property - Include a description of each transaction or contract related to the purchase, sale, rental or lease of real property, or indicate that no such transactions or contracts existed. This component must list rental and lease agreements between the collaborative and school districts, charter school boards, and/or municipalities. Note that the description of each transaction or contract must indicate whether goods or services were exchanged and/or payments were made toward the sale, rental or lease of real property.

Annual Determination and Disclosure of Cumulative Surplus - In accordance with 603 CMR 50.07(9), Limitation on Surplus Funds and Department guidelines, at the close of the fiscal year, unexpended general funds may be carried forward and used in subsequent budget cycles. These unexpended general funds are determined to be the current surplus. Cumulative surplus is derived by adding prior year surplus funds to the current year surplus funds. The collaborative board of directors shall annually **approve by majority vote**, the dollar amount designated as cumulative surplus.

The board of directors **shall vote annually** to retain the cumulative surplus funds for the collaborative's use or return all, or some portion, of the funds to the member districts. The determination of surplus funds (worksheet provided in Appendix B) shall not include funds deposited in a capital reserve as provided for in 603 CMR 50.07(10), funds deposited in trust in accordance with M.G.L. c. 32B, § 20, or funds prepaid to the collaborative for tuition or services in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E. In no event shall such cumulative surplus funds exceed 25 percent of the audited fiscal year's general fund expenditures.

Findings and Questioned Costs - The Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs **(Appendix C)** must identify significant deficiencies, material weaknesses, fraud, illegal acts, violations of provisions of contracts and grant agreements, and abuse related to financial statements for which Government Auditing Standards requires reporting.

Prior Audit Findings -The Status Report of Prior Audit Findings (Appendix D) reports the auditor’s assessment of the status of all findings included within the prior year’s Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs.

Board of Directors Certification of Acceptance - At the time of submission each Collaborative must include either the approved board meeting minutes or a certification of acceptance (forms provided in Appendix A), certifying that the board

of directors has voted to accept the information included in the Annual Independent Audit.

Management Letter - Issues identified that are not material but more than inconsequential must be communicated in a management letter.

Cumulative Surplus Calculation

Massachusetts General Law c. 40, § 4E permits two or more school committees and or charter school boards of trustees to enter into a written collaborative agreement (agreement) to provide shared programs and services, as long as the primary purpose of these shared programs and services is to complement the educational programs of member school committees and charter school boards in a cost-effective manner. Each agreement outlines board determined policies and procedures and includes the declaration of a limit to the total amount of surplus funds that can be carried forward in subsequent budget cycles. The Education Collaborative regulations, initially developed and adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in 2013 and revised in 2020, reflect statutory changes and clarify uniform rules and procedures governing the establishment and operation of educational collaboratives.

Additionally, the regulations outline the 25 percent limitation on the amount of surplus funds an education collaborative may carry forward to be used in subsequent budget cycles. Please use the Cumulative Surplus worksheet (Appendix B) to calculate the FY25 cumulative surplus.

Collaborative Board of Directors Acceptance

The collaborative board must discuss and **vote** to accept the annual independent audit report **and** the annual determination of cumulative surplus at a meeting held in compliance with the Open Meeting Law[iii]. Upon acceptance and no later than **January 1**, **2026,** each collaborative board must file all required FY25 documents with the Department, the Office of the State Auditor, and the chair of each member school committee and charter school board.

PLEASE NOTE THAT JANUARY 1ST IS A STATUTORY DEADLINE AND CANNOT BE WAIVED BY THE DEPARTMENT. IF A COLLABORATIVE WILL NOT MEET THE SUBMISSION DEADLINE, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MUST NOTIFY THE DEPARTMENT AND THE STATE AUDITOR IN WRITING.

Naming of Documents, Electronic Submission and Posting Requirements

Please be sure to use the following naming conventions when you submit the following documents, as applicable.

Document	File Format	Naming Convention	Notes
Annual Independent Audit Report	PDF	FY25 **CollabName**_AuditReport	An **acronym** may be substituted for the **CollabName.**
Vote of Acceptance by the Board of Directors Board Determination Vote (Acceptance/Reduction) of Cumulative Surplus *(Appendix A)*	PDF PDF	FY25 **CollabName**_Audit Vote FY25 **CollabName**_CSurplus Vote	If changes are made prior to the board vote, approved meeting minutes reflecting the board discussion must be submitted.
Cumulative Surplus Worksheet *(Appendix B)*	PDF	FY25 **CollabName**_Cumulative Surplus Worksheet	Do not modify existing fields.
Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs *(Appendix C)*	PDF	FY25 **CollabName**_Findings	If applicable
Status of Prior Audit Findings *(Appendix D)*	PDF	FY25 **CollabName**_StatusPrior Findings	If applicable

All documents must be submitted to the Department in electronic format (PDF for reports, letters, and signature pages) via the Education Collaborative Drop Box in the Department's Security Portal. Please ensure that the report is saved as a PDF and not as an image file. Image files are often too large to upload to the Drop Box. All annual independent audit reports must be received between **October 1, 2025,** and **January 1, 2026**, using the directions below:

1. Navigate to the MA Education Security Portal webpage.
2. Enter your username and password.
3. Select **Application List** at the top of the page.
4. Select **Drop Box Central** from the center of the page.
5. Select **Education Collaboratives** from the Drop Box list then select **Next**.
6. Select **Browse** to find and select the FY25 document(s) on your computer.
7. Select the **Upload File** button to transmit your document(s).

If you are unable to access any of these fields, you may not have the necessary security clearance and should contact your collaborative's directory administrator in order to gain access to the portal.

Once your submission has been received, you will receive an email confirming receipt of the document(s), the date, and the time of submission. Please email any questions regarding this submission to the educationcollaborativeteam@mass.gov.

APPENDIX A Certification of Board Votes

NAME OF COLLABORATIVE

Acceptance of Annual Independent Audit Report (Board Vote)
For the Year Ended June 30, 2025

We, the Board of Directors of the **[Insert name of Collaborative]**, voted to accept the representations of management and the expression of the opinions made by **[Insert name of Auditor]** as embodied in the financial statements, required supplementary schedules and independent auditor's reports for the year ended June 30, 2025.

We also certify that the representations made by management and the disclosures in the financial statements are accurate and have been correctly and completely disclosed as required by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and under Commonwealth of Massachusetts laws for the year ended June 30, 2025.

Board Chairperson	Date of Board Vote

NAME OF COLLABORATIVE

Determination of Cumulative Surplus (Board Vote)
For the Year Ended June 30, 2025

We, the Board of Directors of the **[Insert name of Collaborative]**, have determined the FY25 cumulative surplus to be $ _____ and have voted to accept/reduce said surplus as presented in the Cumulative Surplus worksheet (Appendix B) .

We also certify that the representations made by management and the disclosures in the financial statements are accurate and have been correctly and completely disclosed as required by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and under Commonwealth of Massachusetts laws for the year ended June 30, 2025.

Board Chairperson	Date of Board Vote

APPENDIX B Cumulative Surplus Worksheet

FY25 Cumulative Surplus Worksheet

To activate the worksheet double click inside the table below, or right-click, then choose "Open Worksheet Object." Enter the values and corresponding page numbers from the FY25 financial statements (FS) into the worksheet. Formulas have been embedded within certain fields, to assist with the calculation of the FY25 cumulative surplus and its corresponding percentage of the collaborative's reported FY25 general fund expenditures. When completed, and prior to uploading it to the Department's Security Portal, the worksheet should reflect both the collaborative board's determination of surplus (amount), and the assignment of any cumulative surplus, in excess of the 25 percent limitation. The FY25 Annual Independent Audit Report submission and all requested documents must be submitted to the Department **no later than January 1, 2026.**

[Enter Collaborative Name]

Surplus Calculation

Fiscal Year 2025	Enter values below	Calculated Column	Page in FY25 FS
(A) **Surplus as of June 30, 2024**	[Enter value]		(A) **p.**
(B) **Board voted uses of surplus funds during FY23**		$ -	(B) **p.**
(Uses of FY24 surplus used during FY25)			
B(1) used to support the FY25 budget	[Enter value]		**p.**
B(2) issued as credits to member districts	[Enter value]		**p.**
B(3) issued as a check(s) to member district(s)	[Enter value]		**p.**
B(4) deposited to a restricted account(s)	[Enter value]		**p.**
(C) **FY25 Total General Fund Expenditures**	[Enter value]		(C) **p.**
(D) **FY25 Unexpended General Funds**	[Enter value]		(D) **p.**
(E) Cumulative Surplus as of June 30, 2025	(A) - (B) + (C) = (D)	#VALUE!	
(F) Cumulative Surplus Percentage	(D) ÷ (E)	**#VALUE!**	
	Allowable Cumulative Surplus based upon Expenditures	#VALUE!	

CUMULATIVE SURPLUS REDUCTION *(if necessary)*

Allowable uses of surplus to reduce excess to or below the 25% limit

(E)	Cumulative surplus as of June 30, 2025 before Reductions	#VALUE!
	Cumulative Surplus Percentage before Reductions	#VALUE!
	25% limit (allowed)	#VALUE!
(G) Cumulative Surplus **REDUCTIONS**		
(G)1 Credited to member districts for tuition, services, etc.	[Enter value]	
(G)2 Depositd to an established trust and/or reserve fund	[Enter value]	
(G)3 Returned (check) to school districts/towns	[Enter value]	
	Total Reductions	$ -
	Cumulative Surplus after Reductions	**#VALUE!**
	FY25 Cumulative Surplus Percentage after Reductions	**#VALUE!**

APPENDIX C Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs

NAME OF COLLABORATIVE

Schedule of Findings and Responses
For the Year Ended June 30, 2025

Item 2025-01 - [Title of Finding]
Condition:

Criteria:

Cause:

Potential effect:

Response:

Item 2025-02 - [Title of Finding]
Condition:

Criteria:

Cause:

Potential effect:

Response:

[Continue to list items consecutively, as necessary]

APPENDIX D Status Report of Prior Audit Findings

NAME OF COLLABORATIVE

Status Report of Prior Audit Findings
For the Year Ended June 30, 2025

Item 2024-01 [Status]

Item 2024-02 [Status]

APPENDIX E Endnotes

[i] Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, Section 4E (d): Each board of directors of an education collaborative shall annually prepare financial statements, including: (1) a statement of net assets; (2) a statement of revenues, expenditures and changes in net assets; and (3) such supplemental statements and schedules as may be required by regulation. Each board of directors of an education collaborative shall annually cause an independent audit to be made of its financial statements consistent with generally accepted governmental auditing standards and shall discuss and vote to accept the audit report at an open meeting of the board. Each board of directors shall file such audit report and any related management letters annually on or before January 1 for the previous fiscal year with the department and the state auditor and shall transmit a copy of such audit report and any related management letters to each member school committee and charter school board.

[ii] Education Collaborative Regulations 603 CMR 50.08(2): Audit Report: An educational collaborative shall submit an annual independent audit report to the collaborative board of directors for discussion and approval. Upon approval by the collaborative board of directors and no later than January 1st of each year, the annual audit report for the preceding fiscal year shall be submitted to the chair of each member district, the Commissioner and the State Auditor. The collaborative shall make the audit report available on its website. The Department, in consultation with the State Auditor, may establish standards for financial reporting and for supplemental statements to accompany the audit report, as needed. The audit report shall be presented in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and additional guidelines as may be established by the Department. The audited financial statements, accompanying notes, and supplemental schedules shall also disclose:

(a) transactions between the educational collaborative and any related for-profit or non-profit organization;
(b) transactions or contracts related to the purchase, sale, rental, or lease of real property;
(c) the names, duties, and total compensation of the five most highly compensated employees;
(d) the amounts expended on administration and overhead;
(e) any accounts held by the collaborative that may be spent at the discretion of another person or entity; and
(f) the amounts expended on services for individuals with disabilities, age 22 and older.

[iii] Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, § 20: Meetings of a public body to be open to the public; notice of meeting; remote participation; recording and transmission of meeting; removal of persons for disruption of proceedings; office holders to certify receipt of open meeting law and educational materials
Section 20. (a) Except as provided in section 21, all meetings of a public body shall be open to the public.

dese

Education Collaborative Team

October 2025

Fall Into the New School Year!

With the changing of the season, we are filled with optimism and gratitude for the opportunities ahead. Each fall marks a fresh chapter—one full of possibility for students, families, and educators across our state. Together, we step into this season with renewed energy, ready to nurture curiosity, inspire achievement, and ensure that every learner has the support they need to thrive. Your commitment to nurturing the unique strengths of every student continues to inspire us, and we remain deeply grateful for your dedication.

We are excited to welcome Commissioner Pedro Martinez and look forward to his leadership in supporting your important work. As we embark on this journey, let us embrace the challenges and opportunities ahead with hope, determination, and a shared commitment to student success.

Ruth and Paulajo

Education Collaborative Board Member Training

After much ado, we have successfully launched the online Education Collaborative Board Member Training. Thank you to those of you who have tested the new platform, Canvas Catalog, and provided valuable feedback. We are pleased to share that of the 262 board members across 24 collaboratives, 191 have completed the board training. All board members who completed the training between July 15, 2025 and October 10, 2025, will find their renewal dates have been updated to 2031! Certificates will be emailed directly to board members and collaborative leaders in the upcoming weeks.

All **new** board members and those whose training has expired or will expire in 2025, MUST complete the new training in order for the collaborative to be in full compliance with current statute and regulation. Please continue to send all board member changes to paulajo.gaines@mass.gov so that we send the Canvas Catalog invitations to your new members.

FY25 Annual Report and Annual Independent Audit Submissions

As always, the annual report and annual independent audit may be submitted any time after October 1, 2025 but not later than January 1, 2026. You will find the submission instructions in the guidance documents that accompanied this bulletin. If you have difficulty opening either document, please write to the paulajo.gaines@mass.gov for assistance.

- ✓ The annual report must report directly on the progress made toward achieving the purpose(s) and objectives **set forth in the collaborative agreement** and indicate the measures that the collaborative uses to determine progress toward achieving the purpose(s) and objectives. Re-stating and reporting on the purpose(s) and objectives listed in the collaborative agreement helps to maintain alignment between the collaborative's establishing objectives and the collaboratives year-to-year accomplishments.

- ✓ Each board of directors shall file the annual independent audit report and any related management letters annually on or before January 1 for the previous fiscal year with the Department and the State Auditor at and shall transmit a copy of such audit report and any related management letters to each member school committee and charter school board. FY25 audit submissions are to be emailed to Mr. Paul Shanley in the State Auditor's Office using the following email address: Paul.Shanley@MassAuditor.Gov.

The FY26 Annual Independent Audit Guidelines and Cumulative Surplus Guidance will be available early in 2026.

Financial Review Last year, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) implemented a new financial review protocol and report structure for the required 6-year financial review. The financial review (review) is an important part of ensuring the accountability and transparency of collaboratives and one method by which the Department examines the policies of each collaborative and informs collaborative boards and member districts about the collaborative's financial condition. Ten collaboratives have completed the review with three reports having been finalized and seven reports currently in draft form. Seven reviews will be conducted in the 2025-26 school year and the remaining seven reviews will be conducted in FY26 by Department vendors in accordance with the criteria and scope established by the Department and outlined in protocol and accompanying report.

Communications
Collaborative Board Meetings and Department Staff – As many of you are aware, the Education Collaborative Team is continually exploring strategies to enhance contact with you and your board members. Once again, will are hoping to virtually attend at least one of your board meetings. This year, we are asking you to provide us with two meeting dates (other than audit meetings) so that we may schedule at least one preferred date for each collaborative.

Be on the lookout for a separate email to executive directors asking each of you to look at your board meeting's schedules and provide two optional dates when you might want us to attend your board meeting. Once we have those dates, we will create a schedule to attend a meeting for each collaborative throughout the year. **We look forward to seeing you!**

School and District Profiles – The Department routinely uses directory administration lists to send important messages and reminders to the field. Distribution lists are populated from the Department's School and District Profiles. Each collaborative has at least one staff member designated as the school's Directory Administrator who can add, remove, and update all permissions, roles, and functions for staff members in Directory Administration. Please reach out to a Data Collections Support Specialist if you need help updating your School and District Profile or accessing your Security Portal account.

Commissioner's Weekly Update - If you haven't already done so, we encourage you to subscribe to Commissioner Martinez's Weekly Update.

More Reminders

- ✓ Share the FY25 Annual Independent Audit Guidelines with your auditors;
- ✓ Post the Board of Directors Meeting schedule for 2025-26 to the collaborative website, with the anticipated date for the annual independent audit review;
- ✓ Post all agendas and approved board meeting minutes per Open Meeting Law requirements;
- ✓ Consult the Guidance for Amending a Collaborative Agreement when considering amending your collaborative agreement, to ensure a smooth approval process;
- ✓ Hold at least 6 (six) board meetings; and
- ✓ Submit an electronic (pdf) board packet to the Education Collaborative Team prior to each scheduled board meeting.

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica MA 01821 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: October 23, 2025
Re: MOEC Financial Leadership Academy

Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives is offering a three day financial and governance leadership academy this Fall. I am leading these workshops along with a couple other Executive Directors in the state. The first session was well attended with 40 Collaborative leaders. To date, the feedback on the session evaluations was very strong with 9 stating they found the session very useful, 3 found the session useful and 1 person found the session somewhat useful. The second session will be held on October 28 and the third will be held on November 18th. I have enclosed the agenda for the three days as well as our first day's presentation.

Required Action:

- None

Attachments:

- MOEC Financial Leadership Academy Three Session Agenda
- MOEC Financial Leadership Academy - Day 1 Presentation

Day One - September 30

Effective Budgeting and Financial Management

i. Process to create tuition
ii. Ratios/1:1s
iii. Process/policy
iv. What triggers budget revisions?
v. Building buffers into the budget

Consistent and Stable Revenue Stream

i. How to project revenue
ii. Projecting enrollment
iii. How revenue is handled in the budget

Sufficient and Diverse Funding Sources

i. Creating various revenue streams
ii. Transportation
iii. Adult Services including transportation
iv. Grants
v. PD
vi. Other

Day Two - October 28

Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Requirements

i. Procurement
ii. OPEB
iii. Establishing Capital Plans
iv. Fringe benefits
v. MTRS/State Retirement
vi. Various funds we can/cannot have
vii. How to address depreciation and amortization
viii. Ties to collaborative agreements

Supporting the Business Office Team

i. Building Redundant Capacity
ii. Evaluating Business and Finance Staff
iii. Effective structures and systems

Day Three - November 18

Adequate Facilities

Capital Plans Implementation Panel to discuss lease vs. district vs. own (reflect MOEC facilities assessment)

i. Public school classrooms
    a. Clarity around length of contract
    b. Importance of forging relationships with other members in the event that district takes the space back
    c. Agreements for maintenance responsibilities and funding for shared spaces
    d. Clarify use and shared responsibility for the costs and maintenance of existing equipment and staffing
ii. Private Lease
iii. Own

MOEC Financial Leadership Academy

Session 1 - September 30, 2025

Dr. Chris A. Scott,

Executive Director, Valley Collaborative (2012- Present),

MOEC Treasurer (2019 – Present)

1

Effective Budgeting & Financial Management

- Criterion 7 in DESE Financial Review of Collaboratives

- Budget development at Valley occurs 12 months of the year. Valley continuously works with all stakeholders such as member district Special Education directors, Valley Principals, Valley Facilities, Technology, and Transportation departments, to determine the programmatic and the capital needs of the Collaborative.

2

Effective Budgeting & Financial Management (cont.)

- Valley prides itself on the fact that its Board spends millions of dollars annually to ensure Valley consistently offers the highest quality programming in state-of-the-art facilities. Please see Valley budgets for details.

Effective Budgeting & Financial Management (cont.)

- Valley Collaborative uses **Infinite Visions** as its financial system. More specifically, it utilizes the following modules in **Infinite Visions**: Core Accounting, Accounts Receivable, and Human Resources modules. Valley also uses **ADP** for payroll/HR and **SPEDfi** is used for DESE tuition and services billing.

- All Valley budgets are balanced. Please see Valley budgets for details.

4

Effective Budgeting & Financial Management (cont.)

- Valley always adheres to its budgets and budget amendments within +/- 2% on average within any given quarter and has never overspent. Furthermore, Valley has been returning funds to member districts for over a decade.

- Please refer to Valley Collaborative's website for Board meeting minutes and board books.

5

Effective Budgeting & Financial Management (cont.)

- Valley's artifacts
  1. Surplus and Budget Tables
  2. FY24 February Revenue by District
  3. FY24 February Revenue by School & Program
  4. FY24 Revenue by District
  5. FY24 Revenue by School & Program
  6. FY24 Year-to-Date Revenue Member Non-Member
  7. FY24 90 Days Aging Report
  8. FY24 90 Days Aging Report Outstanding Only

Effective Budgeting & Financial Management (cont.)

- Importance of communication among all administrators in forming the budget including staffing decisions

- Process to create tuition - **Valley's staff to student ratio chart &** **Valley's Tuition Rate Sheet**

Effective Budgeting & Financial Management (cont.)

- Ratios/1:1s – **Valley's staff to student ratio chart**
- Process/policy – **Valley's Finance Manual and HR & Payroll Manual**
- What triggers budget revisions? **Valley's Quarterly Budget Revisions**
- Building in buffers into the budget

8

Consistent and Stable Revenue Stream

- Criterion 2 in DESE Financial Review of Collaboratives

- Valley's artifacts
  1. HS Enrollment Analysis by Program Type
  2. FY24 IEP-Based BCBA Weekly Hours and FTE
  3. FY24 IEP-Based OT Weekly Hours and FTEs
  4. FY24 IEP-Based PT Weekly Hours and FTEs
  5. FY24 IEP-Based SLP Weekly Hours and FTEs
  6. FY24 IEP-Based SW Weekly Hours and FTEs
  7. Memo - FY'21 Budget Amendment Presentation

Consistent and Stable Revenue Stream (cont.)

- Turn & Talk
  - How to project revenue?
  - How do you project/predict enrollment trends?

Sufficient and Diverse Funding Sources

- Criterion 1 in DESE Financial Review on Collaboratives

- Valley Collaborative has numerous revenue sources. Valley has a mix of member and nonmember students enrolled. It fluctuates from 40-60% Non-Member depending upon the year. Non-Member districts pay approximately 25% more than member districts to enroll their students at Valley. Furthermore, Valley operates one of the largest DDS and MRC vocational programs in the Northeast for individuals 22+ years old. Please find attached financials for the DDS & MRC programs. Please also find attached FY23 & FY24 data from SPEDfi.

11

Sufficient and Diverse Funding Sources

- Valley's artifacts
  1. C1a HS Enrollment Analysis by Program Type
  2. C1aA Enrollment Start and End of School Year Including Pre-Covid
  3. C1aB Unique Students FY23 FY24 Member Non-Member
  4. C1aC Number of Student Days FY23 FY24 Member Non-Member
  5. C1aD1 FY23FY24 Revenue District Status
  6. C1aD2 FY23 and FY24 Program Revenue
  7. C1e - DDS_MRC Total Revenue by Fiscal Year 2019-2023 05.15.24

12

Sufficient and Diverse Funding Sources (cont.)

- Turn & Talk
  - Creating various revenue streams
  - Transportation
  - Adult Services including transportation
  - Grants
  - PD
  - Other

13

Q & A

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health & Human Services
Department of Developmental Services
40 Broad Street, 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02109

Maura T. Healey
Governor

Kimberley Driscoll
Lieutenant Governor

Kiame Mahaniah, MD, MBA
Secretary

Sarah W. Peterson
Commissioner

Area Code (617) 727-5608 Video
Phone: (857) 366-4179
www.mass.gov/dds

MEMORANDUM

To: Kari Morrin, Director of Human Resources
Chris A. Scott, Ph.D., Executive Director
Valley Collaborative

From: Mitchell Greenblatt
DDS CORI Administrator

Date: September 12, 2025

Re: CORI Audit of September 9, 2025

On September 9, 2025, a CORI audit was conducted at your agency. At the time CORI's of 8 employees were reviewed. The CORI's reviewed were for employees hired since the time of the last CORI audit. The result of this audit was that there were **no problems found** with the CORI's that were reviewed.

If you have any questions regarding this audit, please feel free to contact me at 857-225-7135 or e-mail me at Mitchell.Greenblatt@Mass.Gov .

ecc: Regional QE Director

Valley Elementary School

135 Coburn Road, Tyngsborough, MA 01879 Tel: (978) 528-7843 | www.valleycollaborative.org

Students from the Valley Elementary School recently enjoyed an exciting and enriching fishing and camping trip, where 12 students had the opportunity to connect with nature, practice life skills, and build lasting friendships. With our Special Education Teacher, Matt McCarthy, along with other members of the Elementary School, the trip provided a supportive and inclusive environment where students could explore the outdoors, learn about fishing techniques, set up tents, and participate in group activities around the campfire. For many, it was a chance to develop independence and confidence while having fun in a safe, structured setting. The experience fostered teamwork, responsibility, and a deeper appreciation for the natural world.

During Fall of 2024, we started a hiking club at Valley Collaborative Elementary school. Every month a group of students would go to Wachusett Mountain and hike to the top. The students had to persevere up the mountain and were rewarded with nice views, a fish pond, and chair lift at the top. Not to mention the nice rocky areas to sit and eat lunch. When winter came we had to put a pause on the hikes due to icy trails, cold temperatures, and snow. Our population of students and their families often don't have the funds to purchase hats and gloves, let alone micro-spikes, snow shoes, base layers, and hiking boots. This is when the MOOR outdoor grant saved the day! With the grant that was awarded to our school we were able to buy ten sets of hats, gloves, base layers, micro-spikes, snow shoes, and hiking boots. Our monthly hiking trips were back on! On March 1, 2025 our school was able to bring a group of students to Wachusett

Valley Elementary School

135 Coburn Road, Tyngsborough, MA 01879 Tel: (978) 528-7843 | www.valleycollaborative.org

Mountain to experience winter hiking. It was a bright 20 degree day. The trails were very icy. All the items were needed for this experience. Not only did the MOOR grant make this day possible, but it will allow us to hike throughout the winter next year, and many years after. We will no longer have to pause the monthly hikes due to weather or trail conditions. We are excited to apply for the MOOR grant focused on camping equipment to accommodate more students and allow us additional camping gear and equipment to plan a Spring camping trip!

Valley Collaborative Elementary School Newsletter

October 2025

Last Month in Review

In September, we started the new school year, greeted new students, welcomed returning students, and families visited the school for an open house. Students spent time outdoors camping, hiking, biking, and participating in Soccer Club. We enjoyed a visit from the Tyngsborough Fire Department where students learned about Fire Safety and participated in a Touch-a-Truck event.

October Events

October 15th, 16th, & 21st: Pumpkin Picking Field Trips

Classes will be returning to Parlee Farms, in Tyngsboro to pick pumpkins, take a hayride, visit farm animals, and enjoy apple cider & donuts. Classes will attend one of the three trips.

October 30th: Dentist Visit

SMILE Mobile Dentist will be returning to Valley on October 30th. The in-school dental team provides cleanings, x-rays, sealants and more. Permission slips have been sent home. You can also sign up at www.myschooldentist.com and select Valley Collaborative - Special Education.

October 31st: Halloween Event

On Halloween, we will hold our annual dance and Trunk-or-Treat events! Parents should be on the lookout the next week or so for a sign-up sheet & details on how to participate. Students may wear costumes on Halloween that exclude masks, weapons, or blood. If the student does not have a costume and would like to wear one, the school has some costumes that the student can borrow for the event. Please let your student's teacher know if you would like them be exempt from Halloween activities.

Parent Advisory Group (PAG)

Please consider joining our Parent Advisory Group

All parents and families are welcome to come on board to collaborate, plan, and help support our school community. This is a fun way to give back, have your voices heard, share creativity with a team, and support families, students, staff, and the entire school community.

If you are interested, or would like further information, please email: Bryan Thomas bthomas@valleycollaborative.org

October Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13 *Columbus Day No School*	14	15 *Pumpkin Picking Trip*	16 *Pumpkin Picking Trip*	17
20	21 *Pumpkin Picking Trip*	22 *Early Release for Students*	23	24
27	28	29	30 *Dentist Visit*	31 *Halloween Trunk-or-Treat*

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Dr., N. Billerica MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: October 23, 2025
Re: Monthly Update - Nick LeClair, Principal of Alternative Programs, Valley Middle School & Transitional High School

---

The school year is off to a strong start for students enrolled in alternative programming at Valley. It has been a positive and productive time and staff and students are working collaboratively to build upon this strong foundation as the year continues into October.

Middle School – Alternative Programming

At the Alternative Middle School, students have had a successful start to the school year. They have participated in several field trips that promote teamwork and engagement, settled into their academic routines, and built meaningful connections with staff and peers. The sense of community is strong, and students are demonstrating positive momentum as they grow both socially and academically.

Transitional High School – Alternative Programming

At the Transitional High School, alternative programming staff and students have focused on building strong therapeutic relationships, particularly as several students transitioned from the middle school program into the high school setting. The team has prioritized connection, community, and consistency, which are key foundations for alternative programming.

Students across grades 9-12 have enjoyed three outdoor academic trips this fall. The first was a day at the beach, where students played bocce, participated in team games, and shared a picnic lunch. Next, the group visited the USS Constitution and Bunker Hill Monument, where students toured the historic ship and climbed to the top of the monument. Most recently, the group went apple picking, complete with a hayride and fresh apple cider donuts. The next trip on the calendar is to the Topsfield Fair, a favorite for students and staff.

In the classroom, students in "Personal Development" are building life skills that prepare them for post-secondary success, and in Social Skills Group, they are exploring different communication styles to strengthen peer and adult interactions. iReady, a new diagnostic tool for screening reading proficiency, has been deployed across grades 6-12.

The vocational programs have also had an excellent start to the year. In-house shops (Landscaping, Culinary, Restoration, and Multimedia) are finding early success with a mix of new and returning students. Landscaping crews have been working hard to enhance community spaces, Culinary students are preparing seasonal dishes, Restoration students are tackling new hands-on projects, and Multimedia students are producing creative digital content for use around the school. Additionally, several students are participating in community college courses and local internships.

Required Action:

None

Attachments:

None

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Dr., N. Billerica MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: October 23, 2025
Re: Monthly Update – Nicole Noska, Principal of Transitional Programs, Valley Middle School & Valley Transitional High School

---

At Valley Middle/Transitional High School Success is Step by Step.

Think like an occupational therapist (OT). That's the message that the OTs who support students at Valley Transitional Middle and High School are bringing to their work with staff and job sites, both inside of the school building and out in the world. "We're always thinking about how we can give our students the most independence possible," explains OT Maggie Curran. "That comes down to figuring out what kind of supports and accommodations they need, whether they're in class or at work."

This year, the all-star OT team, which includes Maggie, Nicole Koles, Haley Lamattina, Joanna Bond, and Katie Brank, has been focused on expanding the accessibility of Valley's many vocational opportunities. During the pandemic, the Transitional Programs began offering more in-house job training aimed at helping students learn job skills that will prepare them for employment down the road. At the general store, for example, students stock shelves and check expiration dates. Finally, there are opportunities for Valley students to do jobs that have been brought in from the community, including repackaging keys for a local car dealership, packing tubing items for a nearby manufacturing company, even cleaning eye glasses that are then donated to local residents who need glasses.

Nicole says that these in-house jobs are helping to prepare students for eventual employment out in the world. "They're practicing job-related skills but we also get to work in a lot of the soft skills that will help them be able to access jobs out in the community in the future."

Haley has been at Valley for just over a year now. A vocational occupational therapist, she focuses on ways of making job training more accessible for students. Valley's in-house restaurant, the Bistro, has long provided students with an opportunity to gain marketable experience in culinary arts and customer service. But Haley saw a chance to provide support for a broader range of students by providing visuals and breaking down tasks into smaller, more manageable steps. "I've noticed that a lot of different types of students are now able to work there," says Haley. Making the workplace more accessible has also expanded the Bistro's ability to serve more students. "One of my happiest moments last year was seeing a non-speaking student order a sandwich at the deli, something that he might not have been able to do in the past," says Haley.

Making in-house jobs more accessible is just one part of a larger focus at Valley these days. Katie describes the work that she and her colleagues are doing as helping everyone at the school think a little more therapeutically. "We're constantly reminding staff of the need to modify tasks, break them down and meet our students where they're at." Katie says that, at heart, the OT team is focused on helping everyone at the school get on the same page when it comes to supporting students. "So many of the goals our teachers and aides are working on with students are generalizable out into the community and the job site."

The OT team brings that same therapeutic lens to job sites out in the community. Haley describes a recent trip to TC's Training Center, a sports facility in North Billerica owned by Valley teacher Tina Carrabba. Students were collecting hockey pucks from the facility's synthetic ice rink when they noticed that many needed to be cleaned. "This was a new task that the students hadn't done before. By breaking the cleaning process down into a bunch of different steps we were able to keep the students working and engaged."

The OTs stress that their success at getting colleagues to adopt an 'OT mindset' builds upon Valley's deep commitment to collaboration on behalf of students here. Katie credits the job coaches for building strong relationships with student workers and helping them establish consistent routines. "They've done such a nice job. What we're doing is working with the job coaches, the teachers and the aides to make it even more of a team effort," says Katie. "There is just a lot of opportunity for different people to figure out how our students can get the most independence and the most success."

Required Action:

None

Attachments:

None

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Dr., N. Billerica MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: October 23, 2025
Re: Monthly Update - Matthew Gentile, Director of DDS and MassAbility Services

---

While the summer months often act as a reprieve for most educational establishments, Valley Collaborative's Adult Program continues in the mission to provide meaningful employment, volunteer, recreational, and social learning opportunities.

The summer provides a great opportunity for Valley to focus on connecting individuals to their own specific interests through different recreational activities and social learning opportunities. The individuals are provided with activities that are both planned specifically for them based on their highlighted interests, as well as with opportunities to engage in activities they may not have ever experienced before. As we often say, people don't know what they don't know - and our goal is to give individuals exposure to new interest areas with the hope of creating lifelong connections. Regular opportunities for exposure to new and/or enjoyable interests included: weekly yoga, fitness classes, gardening workshops, movie screenings, and outdoor activities - just to name a few.

Over the past several months, we have visited a number of different establishments in the community to help individuals connect to new areas of interest.

- Smolak Farm in Andover: the individuals picked peaches and then used their picked fruit to bake and cook a number of different recipes including pie and cobbler.
- Strongwater Farm in Tewksbury: the individuals help keep the grounds in order for the benefit of the animals, and they get to make some great connections as well!
- Willows Park in Salem: the individuals enjoyed the Massachusetts seacoast while indulging in some well-deserved fun and games in the arcade.
- Gillette Stadium in Foxboro: the individuals experienced the Patriot's practice as they prepared for the upcoming football season.
- Aloha Mini Golf in Peabody: the individuals had the opportunity to hone their golf game in a spirted but friendly mini golf competition.
- Monarch Butterfly Ranch in Tewksbury: the individuals were able to learn about the life cycle of the butterfly and how they affect the local ecosystem.
- Jean De Arc Credit Union in Chelmsford: the individuals had the chance to learn about the many different aspects of personal finance and banking through a series of ongoing trainings.
- New England Aquarium in Boston: the individuals got to see all the different marine life and learn about the seemingly infinite habitants of the Atlantic Ocean.
- American Heritage Museum in Hudson: the individuals were able to tour the grounds and learn about the different machines and vehicles used by different branches of the Armed Forces.

The Adult Program at Valley Collaborative continues in our mission to connect the individuals we serve to learning activities in the community. When you see the joy demonstrated by our individuals while they are exposed to these new activities and learn about differing aspect of their local and overarching communities, it is difficult to argue they aren't enjoying their time in the program!

Required Action:

None

Attachments:

None

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive N. Billerica, MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris Scott, Executive Director
Renato Silva, School Safety and Facilities Manager
Date: October 23, 2025
Re: Valley Collaborative School Safety Update

Valley Collaborative remains hyper-focused on continuous safety improvements across the collaborative for students, adult program participants, and staff, along with our physical buildings and fleet of vans. The Safety Committee met most recently on October 16, 2025 to discuss safety initiatives for the 2025 – 2026 academic year, with agenda items including:

- In September, the Town of Billerica hosted its Annual "Billerica Public Schools Safety Meeting," which was well attended by over 30 community members including Renato Silva, Valley Collaborative's School Safety and Facilities Manager and Elias Gioumbakis, Valley's Dean of Students.
    - Among topics discussed were the implementation of body cameras for all Billerica Police Department Officers (with special attention given to preserving student/staff privacy, when officers respond to Billerica schools).
    - Also, Valley's SRO Brooke O'Leary was introduced with full support from Chief Roy Frost.
    - Additionally, during this meeting, emphasis was placed on scheduling and hosting an active shooter drill during the school year for every Billerica Public School. As such, in January, Valley Collaborative staff, along with Billerica First Responders, will conduct a soft active shooter drill. This will be a two-day process – with a primary focus on staff training day one and the intruder drill itself on day two.
- The outdoor security camera system was updated at Valley's flagship location at 40 Linnell Circle to further expand its visibility in areas immediately surrounding the building.
- In Tyngsboro at Valley Elementary School, attention was given to upgrading and updating the front door entry with a new door frame, badge reader, and intercom/camera system.
- In Billerica at 40 Linnell Circle, the main entrance to the building also is a focus of improvement this quarter. While no updates are needed to upgrade the exterior entry door, the interior lobby door has been scheduled to be replaced with industry leading commercial hardware and updated safety access measures for the interior lobby area.

Required Action:

- None

Attachments:

- None

Valley Collaborative Leadership Team

Chris A. Scott, PhD
Executive Director, Finance and Operations
cscott@valleycollaborative.org

Mazyar Moshtaghi
Chief Technology Officer
mmoshtaghi@valleycollaborative org

Matthew Gentile
Director of DDS & Mass Ability
mgentile@valleycollaborative.org

James George
Business Manager/Accountant
jgeorge@valleycollaborative.org

Heather Mackay
Principal, Valley Elementary School
hmackay@valleycollaborative.org

Jessica Marcotte
Lead Nurse
jscalzi@valleycollaborative.org

Joia Mercurio
Deputy Director
jmercurio@valleycollaborative.org

Nick LeClair
Principal, Valley Middle School & Transitional High School: Alternative Programming
nleclair@valleycollaborative.org

Renato Silva
School Safety & Facilities Manager
rsilva@valleycollaborative.org

Kari Morrin
Director of HR, Title IX and 504 Coordinator
kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org

Nicole Noska
Principal, Valley Middle School & Transitional High School: Transitional Programming
nnoska@valleycollaborative.org

Valley Collaborative Board

Dr. Jay Lang, chair
Superintendent, Chelmsford Public Schools

Dr. Geoff Bruno
Superintendent, Groton-Dunstable Regional School District

Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan
Superintendent, Tewksbury Public Schools

Dr. Kerry Clery
Superintendent, Billerica Public Schools

Dr. Denise Pigeon
Superintendent, Nashoba Valley Technical School District

Dr. Michael Flanagan
Superintendent, Tyngsborough Public Schools

Mr. Steven Stone
Superintendent, Dracut Public Schools

Mr. Brad Morgan
Superintendent, North Middlesex Regional School District

Dr. Christopher Chew
Superintendent, Westford Public Schools

Valley Collaborative partners with families, districts, and the community to provide innovative programming that empowers all students and adults to discover their diverse individual strengths, interests, and abilities. In doing so, those we serve become self-actualized members of society who contribute in a responsible manner.

Valley COLLABORATIVE

We are: Hooked

■ Page 2: Valley Elementary's new fishing club has been a huge success.

We are: Gold Medalists

■ Page 3: Valley students brought home the gold at this summer's Special Olympics Collaborative Game Day event, held at St. John's Prep in Danvers.

We are: Exploring

■ Page 6: Individuals in Valley's Adult Programs spent the summer exploring new places and areas of interest.

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Volume 14, Issue 1 News for the extended Valley Collaborative community Fall 2025

Welcome Back: Exciting Times Ahead!

FROM LEFT: HOLLY TIERNEY, DDS PROGRAM COORDINATOR; BRANDON MCHUGH, BILLERICA; DR. CHRIS SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; ASHLEY PALMER-ADAMS, WILMINGTON; AND MATT GENTILE, DIRECTOR OF DDS & MASS ABILITY.

Hello Valley families!

As you know very well, a new school year has begun at Valley! Welcome back to our returning students, families and staff and a very warm welcome to those joining the Valley family for the very first time. We hope you are enjoying this beautiful autumn weather. It has certainly added an extra nice touch to the wonderful beginning of our new school year. Our students and adults began September with smiles and enthusiasm and comfortably settled into their school routines. That would not have happened without all of the time and effort you spent at home preparing for the new year. We thank each of you for all that you did to contribute to such a successful beginning of the school year, but this is just the start! We look forward to your continuing, impactful partnership with us in the months to come.

In the summer newsletter I proudly shared with you the very positive results of the surveys we conducted with Valley's Leadership Team and the Member District Special Education Directors. That data was combined with the 2024 surveys of students, staff and adult service participants to form the foundation of our work on Valley's new Five-Year District Improvement Plan. Even though we received excellent reports and ratings from the Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education as a result of their audits, we know that maintaining that demonstrated excellence requires ongoing team effort and focus as well as adjusting our goals to meet the evolving needs of our students and families.

*continued on page 7

Elementary School: Off to a Running Start!

The 2025–2026 school year is off to a running start! Classrooms are active, curricula are in place, students are learning, therapy is underway, classes are heading out on field trips, and the vibrant exuberance that defines our Elementary School is in full swing. Returning students are looking forward to another fantastic year, and new students are excited for a fresh start!

Families returned to the school on September 24 for our annual Open House and can look forward to our community Trunk-or-Treat and Thanksgiving Brunch events later this fall.

Our outdoor education experiences are also up and running, with another overnight camping trip scheduled for early October. Students are outdoors hiking, biking, participating in soccer club, and all classes will be returning to Parlee Farms for our annual pumpkin-picking trip.

A Message from Principal Heather Mackay:

Welcome back to a brand-new school year! I'm thrilled to see our students return, ready to dive into another exciting chapter of learning, growth, and discovery. The elementary school's theme for the start of this year is: "You Can Do Hard Things." This year brings countless opportunities to explore your interests, build new skills, and create meaningful memories with your classmates and teachers. Each of you is a vital part of our school community. I encourage you to face challenges with confidence, support one another with kindness, and share your ideas freely. Together, let's make this school year one to remember!

Here's what Valley Elementary students and staff are looking forward to this year:

Noah Perkins, 4th grade, "Having fun with friends and being happy!"

Matthew Tobin, 3rd grade, "Going on bike rides!"

Daxiel Pena, 2nd grade, "Field trips"

James Lino, 2nd grade, "Fun things we do in the class, gym class and iPads!"

Nassim Aguaouz, 2nd grade, "Going on field trips, and classroom parties."

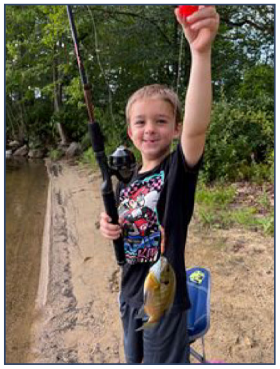
Karen Blackburn, administrative assistant, "I love that the kids have all of these opportunities, like camping, field trips and assemblies."

Luke Shaw, paraprofessional, "I'm excited for Soccer Club, Basketball Club and Football Club!"

Pam McNulty, custodian, "Future adventures and the outstanding team we have this year. There is a lot of love and caring in this building."

Stephanie Davis, classroom Teacher, "Watching kids build friendships, grow and learn."

THIRD GRADER GRACIE TAFF WORKS ON HER MATH SKILLS USING A FACT-FLUENCY PROGRAM CALLED REFLEX.



FIRST GRADER CHRISTIAN LAPOINT SHOWS OFF HIS CATCH

Valley Elementary School Fishing Club – A Hooked Success!

The Valley Elementary School Fishing Club was in full swing this summer. The club, started last year by Nicholas Cote, introduces students to the joys of fishing, often for the first time. "We focus on learning how to cast, identify local fish species, practice good sportsmanship, and develop patience," explains Cote. This summer, 60 students took part in fishing trips to local ponds, where all of them caught fish, and some staff members even caught their very first fish! The fishing club has quickly become a popular topic around the school, with students eagerly asking, "When's the next trip?" Whether it's the thrill of catching a big fish or the peaceful experience of spending time by the lake, the club has been a huge success, leaving everyone excited for the next outing. ■

Welcome Back - Exciting Times Ahead!

*continued from cover

We also know that an essential contributing factor to Valley's exemplary performance is our commitment to continuous improvement. That is why Valley's District Improvement Plan will be such a valuable and guiding document this year and, in the years, to come.

As home family members, you play a vital role not only on your child's team, but also on their school/program team and Team Valley! Your communication with us, including your feedback, are essential not only to your child's success, but also the continuing excellence of our Valley programs and schools. Research tells us that an effective school-home partnership is the "secret sauce" that enhances both student and adult confidence and boosts achievement. We hope you will continue to communicate with teachers, specialists, therapists and administrators, including members of our central office team. We sincerely invite you to share your feedback as well as suggestions for improvement and ideas for the future in order to help us grow, learn, and continue to meet your child's and family's needs. Together, we have the power to do that as we implement the action plan for our Improvement Plan.

Valley's Mission is "*To create a diverse, equitable, inclusive and responsive learning environment by working collaboratively to empower individuals to discover their strengths, navigate confidently with independence and foster lifelong learning, ultimately preparing them to become responsible contributors to society.*"

With your participation, we know we will continue to see that in action once again this year.

I recently came across a quote that likened the beginning of a new school year to starting to write a book. It says *"Today is the first page of a new book. Make it a good story!"* Here at Valley, we want much more than a good story; we want to write an award winning Best Seller! As school and home partners, we can do just that. Let's begin writing this year's book together and continue to add more exciting chapters throughout the year.

Please feel free to contact your child's teachers, therapists, specialists or administrators with any questions, concerns, feedback or ideas.

My door is always open.

Chris A. Scott, Ph. D.
Executive Director

Valley Special Olympians Shine

*continued from page 3

Rosenberg joined the leaders of the other three collaboratives — CREST Collaborative Executive Director Bob Jokela, SEEM Collaborative Executive Director Cathy Lawson, and Valley Collaborative Executive Director Chris Scott — at the event, which is quickly becoming a tradition for all four special education providers.

Every student won a gold medal. Every student won a chance to stand on the three first-place medal pedestals.

CREST Teacher and event disc jockey Andres Jones worked the turntables as students took turns singing and dancing to Jock Jams like "Are you Ready for This?" and the Frozen theme song, "Let It Go." Athletes Isaac Wilson, JJ Tumbarello, and Freddy Abreu led the crowd in singing the national anthem.

A unit of local law enforcement officers — Assistant Superintendent Moe Pratt, of the Essex County Sheriff's Department; Chief Jamie Lovell, Lt. Derek Colella, Sgt. Jeff Smith, Capt. Ashley Sanborn, and Officers Jason Skane, Mike Chase, and Jake Casucci, of the Danvers Police Department; and Officer Chris Liacos of the Gloucester Police Department — led a march of Special Olympians, along the track and onto the field.

To conclude the event's Welcome Ceremony, Valley student Keegan Graham led the participants in a recitation of the Special Olympics Athlete Oath: "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

"We are incredibly proud to see four educational collaboratives join forces to provide a vibrant and inclusive Special Olympics program for students across our communities," said Joanne Haley Sullivan, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives (MOEC). "This partnership reflects the deep commitment of collaboratives to ensure that students of all abilities have access to meaningful opportunities for growth, connection, and achievement. As the statewide organization supporting Massachusetts' educational collaboratives, MOEC celebrates this effort as a powerful example of how collaboration can expand opportunities for students on the full spectrum of disabilities. We commend these collaboratives for their leadership and heart — and for helping every student experience the joy of belonging."

Congratulations to all of the gold medal winners from Valley. We're so proud of you! ■

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Adult Services: Summer Fun and Lifelong Connections

While the summer months often act as a reprieve for most educational establishments, Valley Collaborative's Adult Program pushes straight through and continues in the mission to provide meaningful employment, volunteer, recreational, and social learning opportunities.

The summer provides us a great opportunity for Valley to focus on connecting individuals to their own specific interests through different recreational activities and social learning opportunities. The individuals are provided with activities that are both planned specifically for them based on their highlighted interests, as well as with opportunities to engage in activities they may not have ever experienced before. As we often say at the program, people don't know what they don't know, so our goal is to give them exposure to new interest areas with the hope of creating lifelong connections.

MELAINA CHAPUT, JACK SABA AND ELIZABETH BOCHAN AT SALEM WILLOWS.

(LEFT TO RIGHT) :ERIK REGO, MATT BOOTH, HANNAH COLLINS, LYNDSEY HIR (STAFF), AND MIKAYLA LANDRY ON A VISIT TO SMOLAK FARMS IN NORTH ANDOVER.

Over the past several months we have visited a number of different establishments in the community to help individuals connect to new areas of interest.

At Smolak Farms in Andover the individuals picked peaches and then used the fruit they picked to bake and cook a number of different dishes including pie and cobbler.

At Strongwater Farm in Tewksbury the individuals help keep the grounds in order for the benefit of the animals, and they get to make some great connections as well!

At Salem Willows the individuals get to enjoy the coast while indulging in some much deserved fun and games in the arcade.

At Gillette stadium the individuals got the opportunity to watch the Patriots practice as they prepared for the upcoming season.

At Aloha mini golf the individuals had the opportunity to hone their golf game in a spirited but friendly mini golf competition.

At Monarch Butterfly Ranch in Tewksbury the individuals were able to learn about the life cycle of the butterfly and how they affect the local ecosystem.

Ongoing trainings with Jean De Arc Credit Union continue to give the individuals the chance to learn about the many different aspects of personal finance and banking.

At the New England Aquarium in Boston the individuals got to see all the different marine life and learn about the seemingly infinite inhabitants of the Atlantic Ocean.

At the American Heritage Museum the individuals were able to tour the grounds and learn about the different machines and vehicles used by different branches of the Armed Forces.

When you see the joy exhibited by our individuals while they are exposed to these new activities, and as they learn about differing aspects of their local and overarching communities, it is difficult to argue they aren't enjoying their time in the program! ■

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Bringing Home Gold: Valley Athletes Shine at Special Olympics Collaborative Game Day

Aiden Russell, a senior at Valley Collaborative, held his gold medal between two fingers, feeling the raised Special Olympics symbol. He gave his best on the field, and like his fellow student-athletes, beamed with pride in the bright late spring sunshine on June 11 at St. John's Preparatory School in Danvers.

Four special education collaboratives — Andover-based CREST Collaborative, Billerica-based Valley Collaborative, Stoneham-based SEEM Collaborative, and Beverly-based Northshore Educational Consortium — joined forces for a third year to host a heartwarming and inspiring Special Olympics Collaborative Game Day event, dedicated to students with special needs.

The annual event celebrates the athletic abilities, determination, and joyful spirit of students, fostering an inclusive community, and providing a memorable day of achievement and camaraderie.

Students from participating districts competed in a variety of athletic events designed to be inclusive and accessible for all ability levels, including track and field races, throwing events, and adaptive obstacle courses. The day emphasized participation, personal bests, and the joy of sportsmanship.

"We are incredibly excited to bring this Special Olympics event to our students," said Jae Handler, a CREST Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) and the event's Special Olympics Coordinator. "It's a testament to what can be achieved when organizations work together with a shared vision. This day is all about empowering our students, building their confidence, and giving them a platform to shine brightly."

VALLEY STUDENT AIDEN RUSSELL COMPETES IN THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS COLLABORATIVE GAME DAY, AN ANNUAL EVENT CELEBRATING THE ATHLETIC ABILITIES, DETERMINATION, AND JOYFUL SPIRIT OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

This collaborative effort highlights the commitment of CREST Collaborative, SEEM Collaborative, Northshore Education Consortium, and Valley Collaborative to enhance educational and extracurricular opportunities for students with special needs across their respective communities. By pooling resources and expertise, the collaboratives are able to create a high-quality, impactful event that would be challenging for any single organization to undertake alone.

After the public school Game Day Events grew too large, Bill Bryant, Director of Programs at CREST, spearheaded a new initiative: a collaborative Special Olympics Game Day. A small, dedicated group of collaborative staff members has worked tirelessly for the past three years to keep the event growing and improving each year. Volunteers from the community, school staff, and families have been integral to the event's success, providing encouragement, assistance, and creating a vibrant, supportive atmosphere.

"What a wonderful experience it was for our students to participate in this Special Olympics event," said Francine H. Rosenberg, Executive Director of the Northshore Education Consortium. "Students with disabilities don't always have opportunities to be part of larger community activities. They had the opportunity to compete in fun sporting events, adapted to their skill levels, with students from other schools. They received medals, carried banners, had people cheering for them, and participated in a parade of athletes led by police officers carrying torches. The smiles on the faces of students and staff were priceless! This was a day that they will remember!"

*continued on page 7

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

In the Transitional Programming at Valley Middle/High School, Success is Step by Step

Think like an occupational therapist. That's the message that the OTs who support students at Valley Transitional Middle and High School are bringing to their work with staff and job sites, both inside of the school building and out in the world. "We're always thinking about how we can give our students the most independence possible," explains OT Maggie Curran. "That comes down to figuring out what kind of supports and accommodations they need, whether they're in class or at work."

This year, the all-star OT team, which includes Maggie, Nicole Koles, Haley Lamattina, Joanna Bond, and Katie Brank, has been focused on expanding the accessibility of Valley's many vocational opportunities. In addition to jobs out in the community, Valley students also have opportunities to do jobs that have been brought in from the community, including repackaging keys for a local car dealership, packing tubing items for a nearby manufacturing company, even cleaning eye glasses that are then donated to local residents who need glasses.

Nicole says that these in-house jobs are helping to prepare students for eventual employment out in the world. "They're practicing job-related skills but we also get to work in a lot of the soft skills that will help them be able to access jobs out in the community in the future."

Haley has been at Valley for just over a year now. A vocational occupational therapist, she focuses on ways of making job training more accessible for students. Valley's in-house restaurant, the Bistro, has long provided students with an opportunity to gain marketable experience in culinary arts and customer service. But Haley saw a chance to provide support for a broader range of students by providing visuals and breaking down tasks into smaller, more manageable steps. "I've noticed that a lot of different types of students are now able to work there," says Haley.

FROM LEFT: OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS MAGGIE CURRAN, KATIE BRANK, HALEY LAMATTINA, NICOLE KOLES AND JOANNA BOND HELP STUDENTS IN THE TRANSITIONAL MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL REALIZE VOCATIONAL SUCCESS AT VALLEY AND BEYOND.

Making in-house jobs more accessible is just one part of a larger focus at Valley these days. Katie describes the work that she and her colleagues are doing as helping everyone at the school think a little more therapeutically. "We're constantly reminding staff of the need to modify tasks, break them down and meet our students where they're at." Katie says that, at heart, the OT team is focused on helping everyone at the school get on the same page when it comes to supporting students. "So many of the goals our teachers and aides are working on with students are generalizable out into the community and the job site."

The OT team brings that same therapeutic lens to job sites out in the community. Haley describes a recent trip to TC's Training Center, a sports facility in North Billerica owned by Valley teacher Tina Carrabba. Students were collecting hockey pucks from the facility's synthetic ice rink when they noticed that many needed to be cleaned. "This was a new task that the students hadn't done before. By breaking the cleaning process down into a bunch of different steps we were able to keep the students working and engaged."

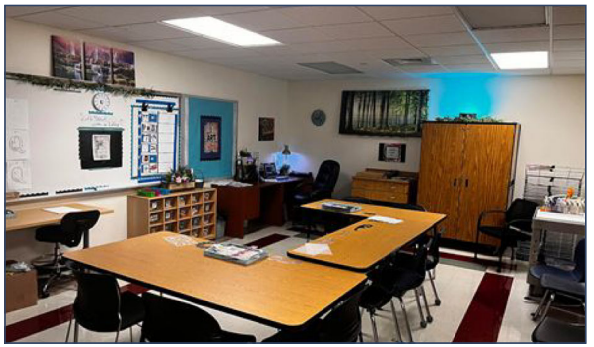
The OTs stress that their success at getting colleagues to adopt an 'OT mindset' builds upon Valley's deep commitment to collaboration on behalf of students here. Katie credits the job coaches for building strong relationships with student workers and helping them establish consistent routines. "What we're doing is working with the job coaches, the teachers and the aides to make it even more of a team effort," says Katie. "There is just a lot of opportunity for different people to figure out how our students can get the most independence and the most success." ■

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Transitional and Alternative Programs: Room to Grow

The Transitional High School, Alternative Programs had a challenge on its hands. How could the school make better use of its existing space in order to better support students? The answer to that question can now be seen in the form of a gleaming new space. Down came a wall, opening up a world of possibilities. Among the new spaces: a milieu with space for movement breaks; dedicated classroom spaces for electives including multimedia, art, and the library; and plenty of spaces where students can work in small groups or with Valley staff.

Principal Nick LeClair describes the process as more of a reshuffling than a rebuilding. "When the classrooms that used to be part of the Middle School Transitional Programs moved upstairs, we realized that we had a chance to reconfigure the space to serve our programs and grade levels." Nick emphasizes that the overhaul didn't end up closing existing rooms but rearranging them. The weight room, a popular destination for students, got an upgrade to make its offerings–free weights, a cable machine and a squat rack–more accessible. Students learning furniture restoration skills through the vocational program have a small woodshop. A multi-media room, which will house Valley's popular news broadcast, reflects growing student interest in digital skills The social aspect of the school is also better reflected in the design of the building, says Nick. "There's a big arcade cabinet that's part of a space where four kids can play games with one another. It's an opportunity to let off some steam and have fun but it's also an opportunity for students to learn how to win and lose gracefully and be a positive friend," says Nick.



THANKS TO THE INGENUITY OF VALLEY'S MAINTENANCE TEAM AND SCHOOL LEADERS, VALLEY STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO LEARNING AREAS AND OTHER SPACES THAT BETTER SUPPORT THEIR NEEDS AND INTERESTS. SEEN HERE: A DESIGNATED ART SPACE, FEATURING TOOLS AND MEDIA FOR STUDENTS TO CREATE INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP PIECES.

The space, which officially opened last month, has been receiving rave reviews from students and staff alike. Nicole Noska, Principal, Transitional Programs, says that the design of the classrooms and learning spaces better reflects the needs of the students. "The addition of areas for electives, hands-on learning, and support services helps make the school feel more complete and connected," says Nicole.

Brian Mihalek, one of the Assistant Principals of the Transitional Programs, says that the redesign improves the programming that Valley offers its students. "Spaces like the woodshop, art room, and multimedia lab give students creative outlets and practical experiences that go beyond traditional academics."

As for students, the reaction has been overwhelmingly positive. "I'm looking forward to using the tools in the workshop for projects," commented one vocational student. "I want to get better at building things." Another praised the addition of quiet spaces where students can work with peers, social workers or just take a time out. "Sometimes my site can get noisy so I like having the choice to go somewhere a little more quiet." The newly expanded games area has been especially well received. "We get to use the arcade cabinet more now that it's not across the street," said one student, adding that he's looking forward to beating his teachers.

Seeing the redesign and the gleaming new facility, it's almost impossible to believe that the site was a construction zone just months ago. Nick says that the speed with which the maintenance department, working with school leaders and Valley's administrative team, completed the project in record time, while the facilities staff worked hard to get the space clean and sparkling. "We are lucky to have a crew that works so quickly," says Nick. ■

From: Nick LeClair
To: Chris Scott
Subject: Facilities
Date: Friday, September 26, 2025 10:43:29 AM

Hi Dr. Scott,

We had a meeting with Dr. Palermo from Cambridge College and he remarked that, of the many collaboratives and vocational schools he visits, ours was amongst the cleanest and most well organized. Kudos to the maintenance team for keeping the building in such pristine condition.

Have a great weekend!

Nick

Nicholas LeClair, M.Ed
Principal, Alternative Programming
Middle School,
Transitional High School

Valley COLLABORATIVE

40 Linnell Circle
Billerica, MA 01821
Tel. 978-528-7834
Fax 978-528-7810

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica MA 01821 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 23, 2025
Re: Executive Session

Executive Session: To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel and/or conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel: Executive Director